

## EXAMPLE 4

### Test Of The Trigger/Detection Assay

To test the ability of an oligonucleotide of the type released in the trigger reaction of the trigger/detection assay to be detected in the detection reaction of the assay, the two hairpin structures shown in Figure 20A were synthesized using standard techniques. The two hairpins are termed the A-hairpin (SEQ ID NO:23) and the T-hairpin (SEQ ID NO:24). The predicted sites of cleavage in the presence of the appropriate annealed primers are indicated by the arrows. The A- and T-hairpins were designed to prevent intra-strand mis-folding by omitting most of the T residues in the A-hairpin and omitting most of the A residues in the T-hairpin. To avoid mis-priming and slippage, the hairpins were designed with local variations in the sequence motifs (*e.g.*, spacing T residues one or two nucleotides apart or in pairs). The A- and T-hairpins can be annealed together to form a duplex which has appropriate ends for directional cloning in pUC-type vectors; restriction sites are located in the loop regions of the duplex and can be used to elongate the stem regions if desired.

The sequence of the test trigger oligonucleotide is shown in Figure 20B; this oligonucleotide is termed the alpha primer (SEQ ID NO:25). The alpha primer is complementary to the 3' arm of the T-hairpin as shown in Figure 20A. When the alpha primer is annealed to the T-hairpin, a cleavage structure is formed that is recognized by thermostable DNA polymerases. Cleavage of the T-hairpin liberates the 5' single-stranded arm of the T-hairpin, generating the tau primer (SEQ ID NO:26) and a cleaved T-hairpin (Figure 20B; SEQ ID NO:27). The tau primer is complementary to the 3' arm of the A-hairpin as shown in Figure 20A. Annealing of the tau primer to the A-hairpin generates another cleavage structure; cleavage of this second cleavage structure liberates the 5' single-stranded arm of the A-hairpin, generating another molecule of the alpha primer which then is annealed to another molecule of the T-hairpin. Thermocycling releases the primers so they can function in additional cleavage reactions. Multiple cycles of annealing and cleavage are carried out. The products of the cleavage reactions are primers and the shortened hairpin

structures shown in Figure 20C. The shortened or cleaved hairpin structures may be resolved from the uncleaved hairpins by electrophoresis on denaturing acrylamide gels.

The annealing and cleavage reactions are carried as follows: In a 50  $\mu$ l reaction volume containing 10 mM Tris-Cl, pH 8.5, 1.0  $\text{MgCl}_2$ , 75 mM KCl, 1 pmole of A-hairpin, 1 pmole T-hairpin, the alpha primer is added at equimolar amount relative to the hairpin structures (1 pmole) or at dilutions ranging from 10- to  $10^6$ -fold and 0.5  $\mu$ l of extract containing a 5' nuclease (prepared as described above) are added. The predicted melting temperature for the alpha or trigger primer is 60°C in the above buffer. Annealing is performed just below this predicted melting temperature at 55°C. Using a Perkin Elmer DNA Thermal Cycler, the reactions are annealed at 55°C for 30 seconds. The temperature is then increased slowly over a five minute period to 72°C to allow for cleavage. After cleavage, the reactions are rapidly brought to 55°C (1°C per second) to allow another cycle of annealing to occur. A range of cycles are performed (20, 40 and 60 cycles) and the reaction products are analyzed at each of these number of cycles. The number of cycles which indicates that the accumulation of cleaved hairpin products has not reached a plateau is then used for subsequent determinations when it is desirable to obtain a quantitative result.

Following the desired number of cycles, the reactions are stopped at 55°C by the addition of 8  $\mu$ l of 95% formamide with 20 mM EDTA and 0.05% marker dyes per 10  $\mu$ l reaction volume. Samples are not heated before loading onto denaturing polyacrylamide gels (10% polyacrylamide, 19:1 crosslinking, 7 M urea, 89 mM tris-borate, pH 8.3, 2.8 mM EDTA). The samples were not heated to allow for the resolution of single-stranded and re-duplexed uncleaved hairpin molecules.

The hairpin molecules may be attached to separate solid support molecules, such as agarose, styrene or magnetic beads, via the 3' end of each hairpin. A spacer molecule may be placed between the 3' end of the hairpin and the bead if so desired. The advantage of attaching the hairpins to a solid support is that this prevents the hybridization of the A- and T-hairpins to one another during the cycles of melting and annealing. The A- and T-hairpins are complementary to one another (as shown in Figure 20D) and if allowed to anneal to one another over their entire lengths this

would reduce the amount of hairpins available for hybridization to the alpha and tau primers during the detection reaction.

The 5' nucleases of the present invention are used in this assay because they lack significant synthetic activity. The lack of synthetic activity results in the production of a single cleaved hairpin product (as shown in Figure 19B, lane 4). Multiple cleavage products may be generated by 1) the presence of interfering synthetic activity (*see* Figure 19B, lanes 6 and 8) or 2) the presence of primer-independent cleavage in the reaction. The presence of primer-independent cleavage is detected in the trigger/detection assay by the presence of different sized products at the fork of the cleavage structure. Primer-independent cleavage can be dampened or repressed, when present, by the use of uncleavable nucleotides in the fork region of the hairpin molecule. For example, thiolated nucleotides can be used to replace several nucleotides at the fork region to prevent primer-independent cleavage.

## EXAMPLE 5

### Cleavage Of Linear Nucleic Acid Substrates

From the above, it should be clear that native (*i.e.*, "wild type") thermostable DNA polymerases are capable of cleaving hairpin structures in a specific manner and that this discovery can be applied with success to a detection assay. In this example, the mutant DNAPs of the present invention are tested against three different cleavage structures shown in Figure 22A. Structure 1 in Figure 22A is simply single stranded 206-mer (the preparation and sequence information for which was discussed above). Structures 2 and 3 are duplexes; structure 2 is the same hairpin structure as shown in Figure 12A (bottom), while structure 3 has the hairpin portion of structure 2 removed.

The cleavage reactions comprised 0.01 pmoles of the resulting substrate DNA, and 1 pmole of pilot oligonucleotide in a total volume of 10  $\mu$ l of 10 mM Tris-Cl, pH 8.3, 100 mM KCl, 1 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>. Reactions were incubated for 30 minutes at 55°C, and stopped by the addition of 8  $\mu$ l of 95% formamide with 20 mM EDTA and 0.05% marker dyes. Samples were heated to 75°C for 2 minutes immediately before